

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 ACDA-12 TRSE-00
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00
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AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PGOV, ET, IN, SO, XO
SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER DISCUSSES HORN OF AFRICA
AND INDIAN OCEAN

1. IN A LENGTHY, EVEN-HANDED STATEMENT TO PARLIAMENT
FEBRUARY 27, FOREIGN MINISTER VAJPAYEE DESCRIBED THE
POSITIONS OF THE US AND THE USSR TOWARD THE CONFLICT
IN THE HORN OF AFRICA AND ALSO PRESENTED THE GOI'S
THOUGHTS ON THE SUBJECT. RESPONDING TO A MOTION
INVITING THE GOVERNMENT'S COMMENTS "ON THE REPORTED
PRESENCE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN OF A US NAVAL TASK FORCE
AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THE EXPLOSIVE SITUATION IN THE
HORN OF AFRICA AND THE SUSPENSION OF THE US-SOVIET
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INDIAN OCEAN TALKS", VAJPAYEE USED THE OPPORTUNITY
TO REASSERT INDIA'S HOPE FOR A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT
"IN CONSONANCE WITH THE LETTER AND SPIRIT OF THE OAU
CHARTER". HE ALSO REPORTED THAT PRIME MINISTER DESAI
HAD WRITTEN TO PRESIDENTS CARTER AND BREZNEV URGING
RESTRAINT ON THE PART OF EXTERNAL POWER; ASKING THEM
TO PROMOTE A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT UNDER UN, OAU OR

OTHER AUSPICES ACCEPTABLE TO THE WARRING PARTIES; AND SUGGESTING THAT ANY SETTLEMENT RESPECT THE PRINCIPLE OF INVIOABILITY OF ESTABLISHED FRONTIERS.

2. ON THE US NAVAL TASK GROUP'S VISIT TO THE INDIAN OCEAN, VAJPAYEE REITERATED THE GOI'S CALL FOR AN INDIAN OCEAN ZONE OF PEACE AND STATED: "WHILE IT IS NOT POSSIBLE FOR US TO ACCURATLY ASSESS THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THIS DEVELOPMENT AND THE SITUATION IN THE HORN OF AFRICA, WE ARE OF THE VIEW THAT SUCH FOREIGN NAVAL PRESENCE IN THE REGION CANNOT BUT ACT AS AN IMPEDIMENT TO THE LESSENING OF THE TENSION IN THE AREA... INDIA CAN ILL AFFORD TO SAVE TENSION-CREATING PRESENCE IN THE

VICINITY OF ITS MARITIME ZONES." HE ADDED THAT "A JUST, PEACEFUL AND NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT OF THE PROBLEM IN THE HORN OF AFRICA IS BOUND TO EXERCISE A HEALTHY INFLUENCE IN BRINGING ABOUT AN EARLY ESTABLISHMENT OF INDIAN OCEAN AS A ZONE OF PEACE AND WILL BE CONDUCTIVE TO DEVELOPMENT OF MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL INTER-SE ECONOMIC COOPERATION IN THE REGION".

3. VAJPAYEE SAID THERE WAS "NO TRUTH" IN REPORTS THAT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE HORN OF AFRICA HAD LED TO ANY

SUSPENSION OF THE US-SOVIET TALKS ON ARMS LIMITATION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IN THE INDIAN OCEAN. NOTING THAT THE TALKS AHD BEEN HELD AS RECENTLY AS TEN DAYS AGO, THE FOREIGN MINISTER REPORTED HIS UNDERSTANDING THAT "CONCRETE PROGRESS HAS BEEN REGISTERED". HOWEVER, HE REFERRED TO SECRETARY VANCE'S STATEMENT THAT SOVIET INVOLVEMENT

IN THE HORN AFFECTED THE POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE IN WHICH THE TALKS WERE HELD AND OBSERVED THAT, CONTRARY TO PREVIOUS PRACTICE, THE PARTIES HAD NOT SET A TIME AND PLACE FOR A SUBSEQUENT MEETING, VAJPAYEE ALSO COMMENTED THAT PRESIDENT CARTER APPEARED TO BE "SLIDING BACK" FORM HIS EARLIER CALL FOR DEMILITARIZATION OF THE INDIAN OCEAN.

4. VAJPAYEE'S DISCUSSION OF THE US POSITION ON THE HORN CONFLICT, AND THE LATTER'S EFFECT ON THE US-SOVIET INDIAN OCEAN TALKS, DREW HEAVILY ON BRIEFINGS AND MATERIAL PROVIED BY THE EMBASSY. HOWEVER, ALTHOUGH WE HAD INFORMED MEA OF THE ROUTINE NATURE OF THE TASK GROUP'S INDIAN OCEAN VISIT, THE FOREIGN MINISTER CHOSE NOT TO MENTION THIS. IN DETAILING THE GOI POSITION ON THE HORN OF AFRICA HE BROKE NO NEW GROUND, AND

REINFORCED OUR EARLIER IMPRESSION THAT INDIA IS NOT
PREPARED TO PLAY A LEADING ROLE IN WORKING TOWARD A
SETTLEMENT. ALTHOUGH HE MENTIONED USG SUPPORT FOR
A UNSC RESOLUTION, (AND OPPOSITION TO IT ELSEWHERE)
HE AVOIDED ANY INDICATION OF INDIA'S POSITION ON THIS
INITIATIVE. THE DISCUSSION WHICH FOLLOWED INCLUDED
CRITICISM OF THE US PRESENCE ON DIEGO GARCIA, BUT,
PERHAPS BECAUSE THE MEMBERS WERE PROBABLY MORE
PREOCCUPIED WITH THE STATE ELECTION RESULTS THEN COMING
IN, THE HOUR LONG EXCHANGES GENERATED LITTLE INTEREST
IN THE HOUSE.

GOHEEN

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Message Attributes

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